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Analyzing A Photograph

1. Study the photograph carefully. Fill in the boxes with appropriate information.

People – Abroad age range included, from young child (approximately 6 years old) to very old man (looks like he may be in his 700s). All look ‘posed’ for the photograph.

Objects – Some of the people held hats. There is a wooden building with the door open but 2 of the 3 windows shut. The third window had the shutters propped open. One corner of the building appears to be held up and leveled by the use of slate rocks. There are leaves on the roof and the limbs on the tree near the building are bare.

Activities – There does not appear to be a specific activity other than posing for the photograph.

2.What is the subject of the photograph? A schoolhouse in Possum Hollow, VA, 1910.

3. List three conclusions about the subject that you can make from studying the photograph.

•Appears to be a special occasions when the school children and some adults from the community are gathers but no indication of what the occasion may be.

•Individuals were well attired, looked like their ‘Sunday best’. Appears they are not impoverished.

• Appears to be fall of the year (tree is bare and leaves are on the roof) but warm enough to just have on long sleeves or suit jackets.

4. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

What is the occasion? Who are the adults in the picture who appear to be other than the teacher? Was the schoolhouse also used for Sunday services?

5. Why is this photograph important to history?

It provides real information of what a rural schoolhouse in Virginia would look like in early 1900’s as well as what people wore.

6. Write your own caption for the photograph –Class of 1910 with the Possum Hollow Leaders.

7. How would you crop this photo to further bring out a main theme? If the purpose is to provide information or architecture and building in VA around the turn of the century I would crop out the period. However, if the purpose is to show dress of inhabitants in rural Virginia in early 1900s I would crop out most of the building.



<http://www.vahistorical.org/collections-and-resources/educator-resources/teaching-photographs>

Truman Presidential Museum & Library